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SESSION ID: CTF-R05

# Learn to Play, Play to Learn: Jeopardy-style CTF Hosted by the US Women's Cyber Team

**PlayCyber | US Cyber Games**

Jessica Gulick, Commissioner
Bradley Wolfenden, Director

**US Women's Cyber Team**

Lily Gross
Alexandria (Ally) Petitt
Elan Smolar-Eisenberg
Gwen Vongkasemsiri
Gillian Morris

# US Cyber Games

The US Cyber Games was founded by Katzcy, in cooperation with the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) program at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

**The mission of the US Cyber Games is to bring talented cybersecurity athletes, coaches, and industry leaders together to build elite US Cyber Teams for global cybersecurity competition.** We are committed to informing and inspiring the broader community on ways to develop tomorrow's cybersecurity workforce.

# Cyber as a Sport

## Cybersecurity Competitions + eSports + Athletics

The growing cybersecurity workforce gap demands a shift in the paradigm around how we look to recruit, train, educate, and prepare well-qualified cybersecurity professionals. We focus in on the convergence of cybersecurity, eSports, and athletics.

Why it's effective:

- Engages new and different populations
- Educates the broader community on the importance of cybersecurity
- Creates an ecosystem of cyber enthusiasts, platform and technology providers, and fans
- Builds a pipeline of skilled individuals ready to enter the workforce
- Establishes a pathway and a vision for cyber-interested individuals to strive towards
- Highlights the many "soft" skills shared between cybersecurity, eSports and athletics

# US Women's Cyber Team

**Empowering women to showcase their talents, represent the United States on the world stage, and be role models for girls who dream big.**

Gender disparity in cybersecurity is a global issue that we, collectively, are turning into an opportunity. This team of highly skilled women who are passionate about increasing the number of women in cybersecurity compete in global cybersecurity competitions and serve as important ambassadors, reaching generations of women to come with inspiration, mentorship, and guidance.

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# Lily Gross

Lily, a cryptography specialist on the US Women's Cyber Team, obtained her B.S. in Computer Science and her M.S. in Cybersecurity from UNC Charlotte. While there, she worked as a research assistant in the CyPhER Lab for the university, performing research into network security and operational technology for the lab's client, Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico. She worked as part-time faculty at the UNC Charlotte from Aug. 2024 to Mar. 2025 teaching an undergraduate capstone course to train the university's competition team for the Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition. She is passionate about improving access to technology for underrepresented groups and providing avenues for these individuals to be exposed to technology and have the opportunity to pursue it.

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# Ally Petitt

Ally Petitt found her passion for technology when she was 14. In the midst of a global pandemic, she taught herself to code, which led her to her first of 5 technical internships progressively transitioning from software engineering to offensive security. At 16, she became one of the youngest people globally to earn the OSCP certification, discovering 8 CVEs along the way. From performing security assessments on hundreds of targets across enterprise domains to conducting academic research on parallel processing in GPUs, Ally brings a breadth of experience and an insatiable curiosity for her work. Today, Ally is proud to be a member of the first ever U.S. Women's Cyber Team, and she hopes to help inspire and contribute towards the development of a generation of cybersecurity talent. As a full-time vulnerability researcher, she uses her skills to help secure America while doing what she loves.

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# Elan Smolar-Eisenberg

Elan Smolar Eisenberg is a graduate student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, majoring in Information Technology with a focus on cybersecurity. She is a member of the inaugural U.S. Women's Cyber Team, a researcher in the Rensselaer Cybersecurity Collaboratory, and president of the Gamma Nu Eta IT honor society. Her work in quantum cryptography examines potential vulnerabilities in RSA using an IBM quantum supercomputer, and she previously worked on AI-driven intrusion detection systems leveraging quantum computing. Driven by an early start to coding at age eight, Elan continues to innovate in cybersecurity while championing inclusivity and cutting-edge research. She is passionate about harnessing new technologies to improve the lives of those around her.

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# Gwen Vongkasemsiri

Gwen is a senior at Dakota State University in Madison, SD, double majoring in Cyber Operations and Network & Security Administration, with a minor in Digital Forensics. She is co-captain of the U.S. Women's Cyber Team and loves cyber competitions. Most recently, she was part of the winning teams at the 2025 Collegiate Penetration Testing Competition (CPTC) Globals and the Cyber Security Summit CTF. Gwen founded the DSU CTF Club, played middle blocker for the varsity women's volleyball team, and is a private pilot. She also works with the DSU CybHER Security Institute to empower, motivate, educate, and change the perception of girls and women in cybersecurity. After graduation, she will join Microsoft's Offensive Research & Security Engineering (MORSE) team as a Security Program Manager.

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# Gillian Morris

Gillian Morris holds a Master's in Cyber Defense and a Bachelor's in Cyber Operations from Dakota State University. She is an IT Specialist at NAVSEA and an adjunct instructor at Dakota State University, where she teaches cyber operations and forensic analysis. Beyond her professional responsibilities, Gillian is deeply committed to advancing the field through mentorship and hands-on initiatives. As an athlete on the U.S. Women's Cyber Games team, she continuously sharpens her offensive and defensive cybersecurity skills. Beyond competing in competitions, she designs challenges for CTF competitions, including for Maritime Hacking Village, and collaborates on the development of Dakota Conquest, a purple team competition held at DakotaCon.

# Season V, US Cyber Games Schedule

**Kick-Off: Thursday, June 5th (virtual)**
**US Cyber Con: June 6th-7th**

- In-person event (+ virtual components)
- A/D competition
- Job fair + sponsor opportunities
- Bug bounty competition

**Season V, US Cyber Open CTF: June 6th-18th**

- Beginner's Game Room: June 6th-18th
- Competitive CTF: June 9th-18th

**Season V, Cyber Rush Week: June 9th-13th**
**Season V, US Cyber Combine (Invite-only): July 9th - August 31st**

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# CTFd Link and Registration Code

**URL: https://ctfd.uscybergames.com/**

**Registration Code: USWCT<3RSAC**

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# Thanks for joining us!

Visit www.uscybergames.com for more information.
Visit https://apply.uscybergames.com/ for information on coaching!

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